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SUBJECT: BURMA ENVOY GAMBARI AND GVN LEADERS DISCUSS NEXT STEPS FOR  
RESOLVING BURMA'S POLITICAL SITUATION

REF: HANOI 1932

1. (SBU) Summary: During a November 26-27 visit to Hanoi, UN Special Envoy for Burma Ibrahim Gambari urged senior GVN officials to take an active role in resolving the political situation in Burma. Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung presented a "somewhat strong" GVN position, including calling for the Burmese Government to release political prisoners and initiate a dialogue that includes Aung San Suu Kyi. PM Dung's latest remarks echo his message earlier this month made directly to Burma's Prime Minister Thein Sein during his visit to Hanoi (Reftel). Vietnam remains opposed to sanctions. End Summary.

2. (SBU) According to MFA Asia Two Department Assistant Director Pham Hung Tam, Gambari briefed GVN officials on the progress of his work with the Burmese Government and urged the GVN to take an active role in international efforts to resolve Burma's internal political crisis. Noting that Vietnam will soon be a Security Council member and that it maintains better relations with the Burmese Government than most other countries in Southeast Asia, Tam reported that Gambari said he looks forward to the "active participation" of Vietnam. Gambari also mentioned his requests to the Burmese Government for a multiple entry visa to allow more frequent visits and to allow him to act as an intermediary between the sides.

3. (SBU) UNDP Resident Representative John Hendra told Ambassador Michalak that Gambari was "very pleased" with his visit. He said Gambari was surprised that the Vietnamese were "actually somewhat strong" on engaging the Burmese in constructive ways. According to Hendra, who accompanied Gambari to his meetings, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Gia Khiem said Burma must take "concrete steps" on the seven-point roadmap, release all protesters and initiate dialogue with all parties, including with Aung San Suu Kyi. DPM Khiem also said Vietnam values the role of the UN in resolving the situation in Burma and will continue to urge Burma to cooperate.

4. (SBU) Hendra added that, during Prime Minister Dung's private meeting with Gambari, Dung made the same points even more forcefully. Hendra contrasted the GVN's current position with the GVN response in 1996 when former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan asked for GVN support for release of Aung San Suu Kyi. At that time, GVN officials stonewalled Annan on the request. While indicating some flexibility, however, press reports of authoritative GVN statements on February 27 confirm Vietnam's continued opposition to sanctions in addressing the situation in Burma.

MICHALAK